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#### LET THE NEWSPAPERS ALONE.

ISCUSSION of the espionage bill is on in the house. It is the newspaper gag feature that is the special bone of contention. "Suppose the war drags along, there is bound to be some dissatis-

faction, and improper comment must be held down," Representative Volstead argues

But who is to define what "improper comment" consists of? It is possible that some bureau chief, even some cabinet officer, may prove to be woefully lacking. Is this bureau chief or this cabinet officer to be allowed to shield his

misdoings or his ignorance behind a drastic law that muzzles the newspapers;" Says Representative Madden: "The American people are going to furnish men and money to fight this war, and they ought to have information concerning the conduct of the war."

Of course they ought. To deny them this right would be the surest way possible to create suspicion and arouse distrust.

Representative Walsh believes that the newspapers are patriotic enough to maintain a voluntary censorship. As a matter of fact, hasn't it already been proved that they are?

Of course, information or gossip or news that would benefit the enemy is not a proper thing for publication. But no newspaper is going to do anything that will give aid or comfort to the Prussian militarists.

The freer the newspapers are the better it will be for the whole country.-Philadelphia Inquirer.

#### THE CRITIC IN WAR

HESE are days of kindly feelings toward the administration at Washington. For obvious reasons men given to criticism and temperamentally inclined to fault-finding are holding themselves in check. There is, as there should be, a patriotic disposition to restraint of the critical tendency and to patience with all men whose energies are consecrated to the welfare of the nation. Indeed, so universal, so insistent, is the sentiment for enthusiasm in our loyalty to our leaders lest they be discouraged by distrust, that in some quarters notable publicists, hitherto manifestly in sympathy with Germany, are now making themselves ridiculous by their vociferous acclaim of statesmen whom formerly they derided and sought to embarrass.

Unfortunately, this sort of hypocrisy may prove quite as mischievous as the thing we knew as pro-German propaganda. For whereas honest and intelligent criticism of a government is beneficial, dishonest or insincere applause is pernicious. The British might have gone on muddling and blundering had they persisted in giving their support to incompetents from a mistaken sense of patriotism. Why should we abstain from the truth if we have reason to believe that mischief is resulting from silence?

The question is asked with Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, in mind. This gentleman was the subject of much criticism before the war. Apparently he was generally regarded as an ass by men whose judgment commanded confidence. Has he lately had the benefit of an infusion of common sense? Alas, we have perceived no signs of any extraordinary improvement in his mentality. On the contrary, fresh information to hand confirms our impression of his stupidity.—San Francisco Town Talk.

#### NO TYRANNY IN NAME OF LIBERTY.

HE American people so well understand the difference between liberty and license, there is no need for the drastic censorship proposed in the bill now before the Senate of the United States. It is questionable if rigid censorship imposed on the press of the countries at war in Europe has been justified by experience. It is certain that, removed as we are from the acene of actual hostilities, there is not the slightest reason for applying similar restrictions to the American press. The war which we have entered is a contest of democracy against autocracy. We fight to preserve liberties which we so dearly won in the eighteenth century, and to extend their benefits to other

A mournful fact of the contest as waged in Eur , has been the suppression of popular liberties in the most democratic lands. They are submitted to as necessary. The American people will gladly surrender temporarily any freedom which they must yield up in the common cause, but before they are de-



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